

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 09309 101338Z

53

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9309

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: THE CATALAN CONNECTION

REF: MADRID 9268

1. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ HAS BEEN PAYING SUDDEN HOMAGE TO
CATALUNYA IN THREE FOLD FASHION:

BY MEETING WITH A SERIES OF NON COMMUNIST CATALAN
LEADERS IN INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS. IN ADDITION TO THE
MEETINGS WITH PUJOL, PALLACH AND TRIAS FARGAS (REF.)
HE HAS NOW MET WITH THE RADICAL CATALAN SOCIALIST JOAN
RAVENTOS AND WILL MEET WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT
ANTON CANYELLAS.

BY FINALLY DISMASSING THE UNPOPULAR MAYOR OF
BARCELONA JOAQUIN VIOLA AND REPLACING HIM WITH
THE POPULAR FIGURE OF JOSE MARIA SOCIAS HUMBERT,
THE PROGRESSIVE ON TIME LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL SYNDICAL
ORGANIZATION.

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PAGE 02 MADRID 09309 101338Z

BY PLANNING A TRIP TO BARCELONA ON DECEMBER 13.

THREE DAYS BEFORE THE REFERENDUM PRESUMABLY TO PROCLAIM
"CO OFFICIAL" STATUS FOR THE CATALAN LANGUAGE.

2. FROM THE PERSEPCTIVE OF OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN
BARCELONA AND BASED ON RECENT DISCUSSIONS WHICH OUR CONSUL
GENERAL AND EMOFF HAVE HAD WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE CATALAN
FIGURES THIS BURST OF ATTENTION IS DUE PRINCIPALLY TO
THE NEED TO GET A LARGE VOTE IN CATALUNYA IN THE REFER
ENDUM.

IN CATALUNY THE SALIENT ISSUE IS AUTONOMY, SYMBOL
ICALLY REPRESENTED IN THE DEMAND FOR RESTORATION OF THE
GENERALITAT OF 1932 AS THE FORM OG GOVERNMENT FOR THE
CATALAN REGION. THE GENERALITAT IN EXILE IS HEADED BY
JOSEP TARRADELLAS THE AGING PROFOUNDLY ANTI COMMUNIST
MODERATE WHO HAS COME TO REPRESENT, FOR A VARIETY OF
REASONS, THE ASPIRATIONS TOWARD AUTONOMY OF THE CATALAN
REGION.

THIS DEMAND FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE GENERALITAT,
SEEMS SOMEWHAT ANACHRONISITC BUT PROVIDES A LEAST COMMON
DENOMINATOR FOR ACATALAN NOGOTIATING POSITION, MASKING THE VERY
REAL DIFFERENCES AMONG CATALAN POLITICAL GROUPS AND OVER
SHADOWING THE REFERENDUM.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES VOTING PROJECTIONS FOR
THE CATALAN AREA AND PARTICULARLY THE HEVILY
INDUSTRIALIZED PROVINCE OF BARCELONA ARE LOWER THAN
PROJECTED NATION WIDE. THE BARCELONA NEWS MEDIA
PRIVATELY PROJECT IN THE CATALAN AREA SOMEWHERE FROM
55 TO CLOSE 65 PERCENT A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE OF THE
ELIGIBLE VOTERS WHO WILL GO TO THE POLLS AS OPPOSED TO NATION
WIDE ESTIMATES OF 65 TO 70 PER CENTS CURRENTLY IN VOGUE. AND
IN BARCELONA ITSELF ONE POLL OF UNCERTAIN RELIABILITY
SUGGESTS ONLY 51 OF THOSE ELEGIBLE WILL GO TO THE
POLLS.

3. THERE IS APPARENTLY MORE LACK OF INTEREST IN THE REFER-
ENDUM IN CATALUNYA THAN ELSEWHERE, EXCEPT FOR THE TWO
MOST TROUBLED BASQUE PROVINCES OF VIZCAYA AND GUIPUZCOA
WHERE THE VOTING RATE REPORTEDLY MAY BE THE LOWEST IN
SPAIN. (SOME SOURCES SUGGEST IN THE MID 40 RANGE).
NOETHELESS THERE IS NO LACK OF INTEREST IN THE SPRING
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PAGE 03 MADRID 09309 101338Z

ELECTIONS FOR THE NEW CORTES. THOUGH OBSERVERS COINCIDE
IN THE BELIEF THAT THE CATALAN BASED PARTIES WILL GET
FAR AND AWAY THE MOST SEATS, THERE ARE NO RELIABLE
ESTIMATES OF RELATIVE STRENGTH AMONG THEM THOUGH PUJOL
(CONVERGENCIA DEMOCRATICA DE CATALUNYA) AND TRIAS
FARGAS (ESQUERRA REPUBLICANA DE CATALUNYA) MAY HAVE
THE STRONGEST GROUPS. MUCH DEPENDS ON WHETHER A
CENTER LEFT CATALAN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE IS FORMED.

THE CATALAN COMMUNISTS (PSUC). HAVE SOME STRENGTH AMONG
THE IMMIGRANT WORKERS. (A RUMORED PSUC LEADERSHIP CHANGE
WOULD PUT ONE OF SANTIAGO CARILLO'S MEN IN THE
TOP
SPOT, CASTING MORE DOUBT UPON THE PSUC'S CATALAN
CREDENTIALS.) PSOE AND ALIANZA POPULAR ARE WEAK

4. THE CATALAN PARTIES ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PROPORTIONAL
SYSTEMS'S PERCENTAGE LIMITATIONS NOT DISENFRANCHIZED
PARTIES WITH HEAVY STRENGTH IN THE REGION BUT
WITHOUT NATION WIDE FOLLOWING. THEY HOPE THE GOS WILL
ADOPT WHAT HAS COME TO BE KNOWN AS THE "" LINZ FORMULA"
(AFTER JUAN LINZ) THE SPANISH CITIZEN HEAD OF THE
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT YALE AND A LEADING STUDENT OF
SPANISH POLITICAL BEHAVIOR). WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THAT
ANY PARTY, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SEATS, SECURE SAY, 5 PER CENT
OF THE VOTE IN AT LEAST THREE PROVINCES. THIS WOULD ASSURE
REPRESENTATION OF MAJOR GROUPS IN BOTH CATALUNYA AND
THE BASQUE COUNTRY. STABLER

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